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METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

OF MOUNT STERLING, ILLINOIS, CELEBRATES ITS DIAMOND JUBILEE.

The Diamond Jubilee of the Methodist Episcopal church of Mount Sterling, Illinois, was begun Sunday, November 15, 1914, and continued throughout the week with special services each evening. On Sunday members of the congregation rallied and a large crowd was present at the morning service to hear the history of the church as told by Rev. J. O. Kirkpatrick, local pastor.

Sermons were preached by former pastors, including Rev. W. S. Phillips of Cerro Gordo, Illinois; Rev. W. H. McGee, of White Hall; Rev. Jesse Tharp, of Waynesville, Illinois.

A number of other former pastors were present and took part in the celebration before the conclusion of the Jubilee.

The Methodists of Brown County have had a remarkable history and among the remarks of Reverend Kirkpatrick, he said:

“In settling up this fertile section of Illinois, it seems that the Methodist Episcopal church had its representatives on the ground, very nearly if not quite as soon as any of the other religious denominations of Christians. A few Methodist families settled here as early as 1827, and others came in the years that followed closely that date. Levin Green and family, are credited as being the first people of this faith to take up their abode here. Then came the families of Granville Bond, Berry Orr, the Vanderverter's, Reid's, Brown's, Hamilton's, Pev-enhouse's, McGaskill's, Miller's, Bates', Lee's, Sadler's and Six's.

Methodist preaching occurred but seldom during these early times and was dispensed mostly by those who cleared and farmed their own land, built their own homes, raised their own

corn and potatoes, bacon and beans, etc., during the week and preached the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ on the Sabbath. While all were poorly clad, some were at times scarcely able to cloth themselves respectably to appear in public even in that primitive time. Once in a great while a traveling preacher would wend his way into this section and remain a day or so. The early settlers would gather in the little cabins to hear him proclaim the gospel message with a great deal more anxiety and zeal than do the people display today.

“In the year of 1832 the Rushville circuit was formed, which included the territory of Brown County, and Methodism began to develop. Other Methodist families came in to settle among their brethren, and the demand for preaching became greater as the years went by. But there were probably no regular appointments for circuit preachers until 1833, when a regular four weeks’ circuit was established, embracing parts of Adams, Hancock, McDonough, Fulton and Pike counties, which included all of the territory of Brown. Rev. H. Summers, Peter Cartwright, T. N. Ralston, Peter Boring, W. H. Window, Wilson Pitner, W. T. Williams, D. B. Carter, and Spencer W. Hunter were the circuit riders first to preach throughout the newly organized circuit. In 1836 there were twenty-six regular appointments scattered over this territory, and at this time the most popular of the preachers included Dr. John P. Redmond, Peter Akers, John S. Barger, and a number of other faithful and earnest preachers.

“The first sermon of the Methodist faith ever preached in this section of Illinois was by Levin Green in 1829. The first sermon by a traveling preacher was by Spencer W. Hunter in 1830, who formed a class or society in 1831 in the home of Levin Green, about three or four miles north of Mt. Sterling, on the old John Roberts farm now owned by the Givens brothers. This class increased in members and usefulness and in 1837 they considered it necessary to build a log church in their neighborhood, on the farm of Granville Bond, which was the

first structure erected for Methodist worship in this section of the state.

“In 1848 the Ebenezer church was erected a few miles southwest of the old one, the old church was abandoned and the people flocked to the new place of worship. Their worship was faithful and continued in this church until 1875, when through the earnest and zealous labors of Rev. Granville Bond, who had retired as a superannuate of the Illinois conference after many years of earnest, faithful work, they located in Mound Station, and built a new and excellent church at a cost of \$2,400, and dedicated it to God free from debt.

“The Bethel church in Lee township was erected in 1836. It was hewed of logs and cost \$150. A log church was also built in Pea Ridge township in 1834.

“The first Methodists in Mount Sterling were the Brazelton's, Kirlin's, Wilson's, Brainards and Cheseldines, but they had no Methodist preaching until 1837, when Dr. J. P. Redmond first preached at Kirlin's tavern, on Main street, where Frank Hagel's store is now located. In 1840 the first Methodist church was erected in Mt. Sterling. It was a small frame structure, which cost \$500, and was erected, on the site where Dr. Henry Dearborn's office now stands. Dr. William J. Rutledge was the first preacher in charge. In 1852 a parsonage was also built in this city, and this was used until 1876 when through the efforts of Rev. L. W. Waldin, then the minister in charge, a new parsonage was secured. The church built in 1840 became quite dilapidated by 1858, when a new one, considerably larger and more comfortable, was erected on Main Cross and South streets at a cost of \$3,000, and in 1879, this was repaired and partially rebuilt, a new vestibule and belfry added, making the very neat and comfortable house of worship that the good people of the Methodist faith are worshipping in to this day, and in which the diamond anniversary of Methodism in this county was fittingly and elaborately celebrated.